

Garages & Other Ancillary Structures



Historic photo of a detached Norfolk garage



Historic photo of an ancillary structure adjacent to a Norfolk house



Historic photo of an ancillary structure adjacent to a Norfolk house

Ancillary Structures

Ancillary structures may include garages, carriage houses (a garage with a livable second floor), and garden sheds and pavilions. These structures should always be smaller than the main house and, whenever possible, should have similar detailing as the main house. In general, ancillary structures are detached from the main body of the house although they may be connected with a variety of elements like breezeways, fences or pergolas.

Detached Garages & Carriage Houses

The construction of garages and carriage houses can add great value to an existing home. It is best to locate garages at the back of your lot if possible, though it is also possible to build tasteful, attached garages. The principal issues with garages are the size, location and detailing for the doors. A common problem with current construction is that the garage additions often overwhelm the scale and character of the house. General principles for siting and designing garages are listed below.

THE CORNER LOT

For houses on corner lots, the garage should be located in the rear yard close to the property line, turned to face the side street, and be set back to match the house's setback, if possible. It is preferable to locate the garage so that the parking area in front of the garage is at least 15 feet back (18 feet preferred) from the side street property line. This prevents parked cars from encroaching into the public sidewalk which creates a safety hazard.

Corner lots are also good places for two- or three-car carriage houses which incorporate a small apartment, studio or workshop above.

Single-width garage doors up to 8 feet wide are recommended. Paneled door styles appropriate to the style of the house should be used. Doors with divided lights

are recommended, as shown in the photos on the next page. Often it is better to paint the doors a deeper, more contrasting color to help offset the large size, depending on the color palette of the house.

THE IN-LINE LOT

In many cases, there may be enough room to build a one-, two-, or even a three-car garage in the rear yard of a relatively narrow lot. Access to the garage is typically from a narrow driveway, usually 8 to 9 feet wide, that slips along one side of the house.

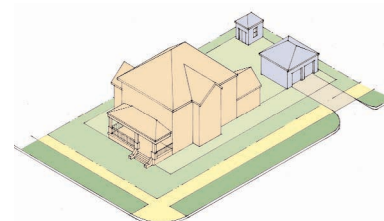
A carriage porch was often used to provide a drop-off at the house and is a good way to screen the back yard and garage area from the front (see photos of existing Norfolk carriage porches on the next page). It is recommended that the garage be placed in the rear of the lot to provide turnaround space between the house and the garage.

ATTACHED GARAGE

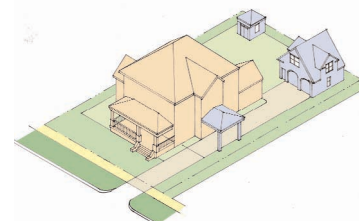
If an attached garage is preferred over a detached one and the lot is wide enough, a one-car garage is recommended. An attached two-car garage addition can create a massing problem in which the garage appears wider than the house. Two- or three-car garages should be detached and located in the rear of the lot.

Attached one-car garages should be treated as any wing addition in terms of its setback from the front of the house (a distance equal to the width of the garage) and its architectural character, which should match that of the house.

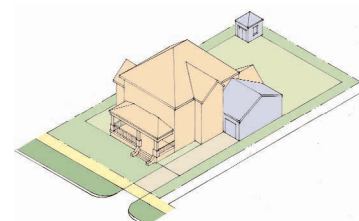
Attached garages are typically built a step or two down from the main living level to prevent gases from seeping into the main living areas.



Ancillary structures include pavilions and detached garages on a corner lot



A porte cochère (carriage porch) and a carriage house is shown on a mid-block lot



An attached garage on a mid-block lot



Historic photo of a carriage house with ancillary structures behind



Historic aerial view of the Larchmont neighborhood showing houses, garages, ancillary structures, and driveways on a typical block